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Wainwright on Instrumental  
Music, Leeds, 1827

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AN ESSAY  
SHOWING THE  
INDEFENSIBILITY  
OF  
INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

IN  
CHRISTIAN CHURCHES,  
FROM ITS BEING A RELIC OF JUDAISM AND POPERY ;

*With Introductory Remarks*

ON OTHER TOPICS CONNECTED THEREWITH,

AND IN

*ALLUSION TO SOME OF THE PAMPHLET OBSERVATIONS*

RESPECTING THE EXISTING DISPUTES AMONGST THE OLD METHODISTS.

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BY THOMAS WAINEWRIGHT,

*(A retired Solicitor)*

LATE OF LEEDS, BUT NOW OF BRAMLEY, NEAR LEEDS.

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*"For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity, a change also in the law."*—HEBREWS, vii. 12.

*"I speak unto wise men, judge ye what I say."*—PAUL.

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## A LETTER,

&c.

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IN my recently published "Letter, in reply to a Letter of a Member of the Methodist New Connexion, addressed in reply to the Rev. Isaac Keeling," it is observed, in reference to certain words and titles which we Protestants chuse still to retain, that "we have generally been ashamed of the extravagant height to which our Roman Catholic fathers carried their imitation of the Jewish worship and hierarchy, having found it proper to Judaize more moderately in several instances; and that for this moderation we are indebted to Providence, and the wisdom of our rulers, who have taught, and obliged us in many respects, to lower our style, and to contract within narrower bounds the meaning of such words and titles;" and it is presumed the same observations will, by parity of reasoning, apply to other Judaizing practices, which we also still chuse to retain in our temples; yet it must be owned that it is with great reluctance we learn any lesson of sobriety, as, I am sorry to say, there are not a few even amongst the poorest Dissenting Congregations, and the old Methodists, who, like the Romish and Reformed Churches, still chuse to retain *so much*, and such parts of Judaism, relating to the pastoral dress, and titles, and organs, and other usages, not *even excepting* the writer's respected friends, the Baptists, so far as they covet titles, or in their churches, use *organs*, or *violoncellos*, or otherwise, (a "sect every where spoken against," *because, forsooth*, they practice *one* of the *first* ordinances of primitive Christianity, in its *original* purity, as it respects *mode* and *subjects*), as serves their worldly purposes, if they do not lament the non-retention of much more of it, so that for these, and other reasons, it may be truly said, it is none of the least of their grievances that they are Dissenters and Methodists, (the latter being "Church Methodists" to a man, are certainly more excusable for Judaizing than the *former*, *from whom* we might have hoped many better things, though there *are some* of the latter, in Leeds at least, who deservedly ought to be called Methodist "Nonconformists," whom, probably, the 'Rev.' travelling Methodist preacher, Isaac Keeling, and the rest of his itinerant fraternity, as *lovers of peace*, may now designate "*a mass of loose fragments*," as they do those of the "Methodist New Connexion," and whom, with the latter, as respects organs, and per-

haps some other Judaizing practices, the writer is glad to find do appear to know *better* than their late *spiritual* guides; and were there the least hope of the *Reverend* lovers of peace being disposed to listen to any thing “a limb of the law” can say, I shall certainly press on their attention the prudent counsel which Gamaliel tendered to the Jewish Sanhedrim, in circumstances not very dissimilar—“Refrain from these men, and let them alone, &c.”) in some of whose “*tabernacles*” and “*chapels*,” especially in those of the *mongrel* Dissenters and Methodists in and about London, and some cities and large towns in the country, and what we all witness in the common “*Steeple Houses*” of the nation, “excepting those of the Baptists,” Judaism, to the *extent* alluded to, is not only *evinced* by the *wooden* inscriptions, which may be read without *reflectors* over the *altar* tables, in not a few of them containing the *Lord's Prayer*, *Apostle's Creed*, and *Decalogue*, but by the canonical *white surplices*, *black gowns*, and *white bands* of the “*Reverend*” personages,\* who conduct the services by *reading* therein the *forms* of “*Common Prayer*,” composed and “*pointed*” by *state priests*, “as they are to be *said*” in our national “*churches*,” which, on these accounts, have more the appearance of *Synagogues*, or “*Steeple Houses*,” than *Meeting Houses*

\* The writer presumes it may, perhaps, astonish not a few of his readers, as indeed it did him, when he was informed, from unquestionable authority, that a PLAIN Baptist Minister, who formerly wore a sailor's jacket, had once the temerity to appear, with great astonishment, in a gown and band, in the pulpit of Hanover Chapel, Peckham. He does not note this *invidiously*, as characteristic of the Baptist Ministers, being not only well aware had the *ex-tar* imitated *their* laudable example, it would have taught him to *dispense* with such foppery, but that the writer cannot hold it more in contempt than that respectable Community, for many good reasons, the *most* respectable amongst the Protestant Dissenters, who do not *like them*, scarcely *partially*, as he submits, practice the *primitive* church order—his object being only to *try* to disencumber at least *some* backs of this appendage, persuading himself he will not labour in vain, if, in the meantime, our dissenting gownsmen at least will study the following extract from Mr. Booth's admirable Essay on the Kingdom of Christ, where he says, very truly—“It may perhaps be said, that clerical habits are indifferent and harmless things, except when they are imposed. But if so, the idea of imposition being excluded, the canonical dress of a Popish Priest, the red hat of a Cardinal, and the triple crown of a Pontiff, may all be justified; for in themselves they are equally harmless, as the gown, the surplice, or the band. Innocent, however, as all these peculiarities are, detached from the ministerial character, and from holy worship; the *reason* or *motive* of wearing them in sacred service may be carnal, base, and sinful. In some, there is too much ground of suspicion, a desire of being esteemed by the vulgar, either as persons of learning, or as episcopally ordained when they are not so; and, in others, a lust of increasing their learned and priestly importance, are the latent reasons of wearing those idle badges of distinction. But when *illiterate* men assume the garb of learning, their vanity is contemptible, &c.”

or *Conventicles* for *Christian* worship; for though all the sectarians alluded to follow the unscriptural examples of those who despise *such puritanical* names, they are *obliged* so to register them by the Toleration Acts, and in doing so, they are actuated from the same principle which leads the first "*clergyman*" in England and Europe to sanction it; though, by the bye, neither of them have any more exclusive right to that title than the meanest preacher, or poorest *member* of any Christian church, who, if Christians *indeed*, are *as much* entitled thereto, in the scripture *sense* of the word, as the Archbishop of Canterbury, or the Pope of Rome, if *really* "*Christians*," as they "*call themselves*;" *otherwise*, the teachers or taught, in any of such Societies, are no more *clergymen*, though would be "*Reverends*" amongst, and appointed by the latter, or those amongst the former, though appointed by the state, than the Brahmins in Hindostan, or Mahometans in Turkey; so that we may safely affirm, that, "*so far from this distinction (between clergy and laity) having a foundation in scripture, stands in direct contradiction, both to the letter and the sense of that unerring standard,*" which was one of the steps of the mystery of iniquity, by which the man of sin acquired such power. But it may be necessary to inform most of my readers, that *this distinction*, as well as the title, REVEREND, *comes from Rome*. An eminent biblical critic, the late Dr. George Campbell, has been at the pains of tracing these terms to their origin, and shall content myself with here quoting the substance of his illustration.

"The terms clergy and laity," says he, "are derived from two Greek words, one signifying lot, or inheritance, and the other people. When Antichrist began to make head, the pastors took special care to improve the respect of the lower ranks, widening the distance between their own order and the condition of their Christian brethren; and for this purpose, they early broached a distinction, which, in process of time, universally prevailed, of the whole Christian commonwealth, into clergy and laity. The title of 'clergy' they appropriated to themselves, intimating that they were selected and contradistinguished from the multitude, the laity, or people, as being, in the present world, by way of eminence, God's *peculium*, or special inheritance."

So much for the origin of this distinction: let us now attend to the doctor's animadversions upon it.

"It is impossible," he tells us, "to conceive a claim in appearance *more arrogant*, or in reality *worse founded*! God is, indeed, in the Old Testament, said to be the inheritance of the Levites, because a determined share of the sacrifices and offerings made to God was, in part, to serve them instead of an



estate in land, such as was given to each of the other tribes. But, mark the difference; *no where* is the tribe of *Levi* called *God's inheritance*, though that expression is repeatedly used of the *whole* nation.\*

Concerning the *whole* Israelitish nation, Moses, who was himself a Levite, says, in an address to God, (Duet. ix. 29.) "They are *thy* people, and *thine* inheritance, which thou broughtest out by thy mighty power." The words in the Septuagint translation, a *Greek* version of the Old Testament, deserve our particular attention, as the *same persons* are, in the same sentence, declared to be both the laity and the clergy! What, says the canonist, at once laymen and clergy? that is certainly absurd; the characters are incompatible; yet it *did not then* appear so to Moses. Now, would it be thought reasonable or just, that what was allowed to be the privilege and the glory of every Israelite, under the more *servile* establishment of Moses, *should*, under the more liberal dispensation of the gospel, be *disclaimed* by all those disciples of Jesus who have *not* been admitted into the *sacred* order, which they, for this reason, have called clerical.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, we find the earthly tabernacle, service, and priesthood, set aside to give place to the truth and substance of all the ancient shadows. The destruction of Jerusalem, according to the Divine prediction, concurred with the doctrine of the Apostles to abolish them. Christ, then, is the only true tabernacle, minister of the sanctuary, altar, sacrifice, priest, &c., to be acknowledged by all Christians who hear the Apostles, and who maintain, with them, that Jesus is the Christ come in the flesh. They who hear the Apostles, forsake the shadows, because the substance is come. They who more or less revive the use of the shadows, so far deny that the substance is come, they in effect deny that Jesus is the Christ come in the flesh, while they seek to establish what he came in the flesh to abolish, and zealously adhere to those things whose very use was to declare that he was not yet come.

True Christians, then, agree with the Apostles in saying, "*Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus is the Christ come in the flesh is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus is the Christ come in the flesh is not of God: and this is the spirit of Antichrist,*" &c. The apostolic creed is summed up in this, that Jesus is the Christ; and, says John, "*Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?*" The great Antichrist, foretold by the Apostles, has now appeared, not only in the Roman, but in most of the *comparatively* reformed churches, both episcopal

\* See Campbell's Lectures on Ecclesiastical History, Vol. I. pages 297—306, where the reader will find much more on the subject that is worthy of his attention.



and congregational ; yet, at no time hath he refused to put these two words together, and say, *Jesus is the Christ*. But he denies the apostolic import of them, and speaks and acts in many respects as if the Messiah were not yet come : he is a liar, and may be convicted of speaking falsehood in what he denies, by the part of the truth which he professes to hold. Thus we find Antichrist professing to admit the truth of all the facts recorded in the Gospel, and hold the apostolic writings as divinely inspired, and yet zealously in the Roman and Episcopalian Protestant Church, if not in some degree in our Dissenting Churches, promoting a poor imitation of all the abolished shadows.

The national righteousness and happiness of Israel are now sought after, in opposition to Christ, the end of the law for righteousness, and the heavenly life to which he rose from the dead. We fondly apply the ancient prophecies to national churches, established by the laws of earthly states and kingdoms, (a poor imitation indeed of that national church which was established of old by the divine law) : and, it would give many of us no small pleasure to hear, that the prophecies concerning the nations had their most notable accomplishment in the infancy of Christianity, (as they chuse to speak,) when God at the first did visit the nations, to take out of them a people for his name, even though the inspired Apostles should solemnly declare, that *to this agree the words of the Prophets*. We have also got earthly altars and sacrifices, holy places made with hands, mortal priests, and ministers of the sanctuary, &c. : in short, every token to show that Jesus was not the Christ come in the flesh, except it be, that we still stupidly put these two words together ; even as the Jews, to this day, with no less stupidity, maintain the credit of those books which prove to demonstration that Jesus is the Christ.

I have chosen to consider jointly what relates to the sanctuary and the minister thereof ; as all the grand things said of both corresponded to each other, had the closest connection in the shadows, are united in the substance, and are, for the most part, closely connected together in the absurd modern imitation ; so that such modern ministers of the sanctuary as acknowledge no holy places made with hands, have been obliged to strain the harder by other methods, to keep up the sacred distinction of their character and office. To return, however, to the subject of *music*, from which it may seem the writer has wandered a little, (and of which, both vocal and instrumental, he has all his life time been passionately fond ; and, even now, *in ejus senectute*, few persons derive greater gratification from it, has, never since he

*began to think*, been able to prevail on himself to scripturally approve of the introduction of *instrumental* music into public divine worship. Those who argue for the practice have certainly narrowed the controversy very much, as they not only admit that *now* "there can be *no obligation* to use an instrument therein," but finally vindicate *their right* to exercise *their own discretion* in selecting that mode of performing an acknowledged duty.

I suspect, however, that this reasoning will not bear a very rigorous scrutiny, and am very sure that the principle upon which they avowedly defend that practice, is a very unwarrantable one; and, were it once allowed as the basis of Christian conduct, in what regards the public worship of God, it would carry them much further in their way to Rome, than they themselves are at present aware of, for, when they *admit* that there *can be* no obligation to use an instrument in the worship of God, they must of course be understood as allowing that, in the kingdom of Christ, there is neither precept nor example for the thing in the New Testament Scriptures. For, *could* either of these be produced, it would not only constitute our *warrant* for the adoption of the practice, but also lay us under an obligation to *obey*. Yet, it is not a little amusing to find them, after explicitly admitting that we have neither precept nor example for the thing, criticising the language used by the Apostles relating to this subject, so as to *wire-draw* from it an *inference* that the *primitive* Christians actually did use instrumental music in their churches!—as, they say, "we find the Apostles, *in all their directions to the churches*, invariably using words which must necessarily imply the use of instrumental music." But, *if this be* the case, then what they have urged cannot be *correct*; for, we *must be under an obligation* to use instruments in divine public worship.

They will, perhaps, endeavour to reconcile this apparent contradiction by contending, as indeed they do, that though the Apostles, "in all their directions to the churches," use language which "necessarily implies the use of instrumental music, yet, it seems *quite apparent* that they left it to the *discretion* of their converts to use instruments or not, according to their situation or circumstances attending the worship." On what evidence they ground this strange assertion I am utterly at a loss to divine: but, certainly, a fact which *seems to them* "quite apparent," ought to have been accompanied by evidence, and, until it be produced, we shall regard it as mere *dictum*, necessary, indeed, to the support of *their* principle, but highly derogatory to the apostolic character.

But, to be a little more particular, I presume RELIGIOUS worship falls under three heads, Moral, Instituted, and Discretionary.

1st. *Moral*.—Prayer is a moral duty, and the singing of praise appears to be so.—Col. iii. 16; Psalms, civ. 33. There may be appendages to moral duties, which are not morally obligatory. Thus, under the Old Testament dispensation, incense was an appendage to prayer, and instrumental music to singing; but, neither the one nor the other was of a moral nature. No one says that it is sinful not to use instrumental music in divine public worship.

2nd. *Instituted*.—Instrumental music was instituted under the Old Testament dispensation. In the time of Moses were used the trumpet and cornet, and David added many other instruments by the Divine command; but the Jewish instituted worship ceased at the death of Christ. Instrumental music was not instituted by Christ or his Apostles; they sang an hymn. Singing is not only a moral duty, but it is instituted under the New Testament dispensation.—Eph. v. 19; Col. iii. 16; &c.

3rd. *Discretionary*.—When a moral or an instituted duty admits of being performed in a variety of ways, none of which are inconsistent with its morality, or with the Divine appointment, there is place for the exercise of discretion in the selection of the *best* mode of performing it. Thus, every church must judge for itself at what hour to begin public worship—what tunes to sing—how often singing shall be performed—and other similar circumstances. If music, as a general term, were either a moral or an instituted duty, instrumental music being included in it, might be lawfully used. But, under the Gospel dispensation, singing *alone* being instituted, instrumental music *is* unlawful. The only case in which *discretion* appears admissible *is*, in the selecting a *mode* of performing a duty, which must be performed in some way, but where the particular way is not appointed. From the introduction of *discretion* in other cases, arises all the will worship of the Romish Church, and, I may truly say, of most of the Protestant Churches also, for, if the lawfulness of instrumental music in public religious worship were to be granted, we could no longer consistently condemn the *farrago* of Popish or Protestant ceremonies. Instrumental music was not admitted even into the Popish church till after the year 1250. Thomas Aquinas, who was born 1225, and died 1274, and whose writings are held in the greatest estimation by the Romish church, writes thus:—"In the old law, God was praised both with musical instruments and human voices; but the Christian church does not use instruments to praise him, lest she

should seem to Judaize." "So that, it seems," says Dr. Jennings, (*Jewish Antiq. Book, I. ch. 5.*) "instrumental music hath been introduced into Christian worship within about the last 500 years, in the darkest and most corrupt times of Popery. It is retained in the Lutheran church, contrary to the opinion of Luther, who, as Eckard confesses, reckoned the organ among the ensigns of Baal. Organs are still used in some of the Dutch churches, but against the minds of their pastors; for, in the National Synod, at Middleburgh, 1581, and in that of Holland and Zeeland, 1594, it was resolved, 'that they would endeavour to obtain of the magistrates the laying aside of organs, and the singing with them in churches.' The Church of England, also, in her homilies, strongly remonstrates against the use of *organs*, and *other instruments of music in churches*. In the homily on the place and time of prayer, after mention of piping, singing, *chanting*, and *playing on organs*, which was in use *before* the Reformation, we are exhorted greatly to *rejoice*, and give thanks to God, that our churches are *delivered* out of *these things*, that displeased God so sore, and that so filthily defiled the *holy house* and *place of prayer*. I only add, that the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, is mentioned among the glories of the mystical Babylon, that mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, whom God will destroy with the sword of his mouth, and with the brightness of his coming!" Against this grand religious establishment, (whether in Romish, Reformed, and *re-reformed* churches, Antichrist, assuming as many shapes as Porteus himself, is to be found more or less in all); the vials of the wrath of God are directed.

Some people have imagined that Antichrist is to be destroyed by armies raised by Protestant princes for that purpose. The New Testament, pointing both to his decay and utter ruin, speaks thus, (2 Thess. ii. 8) "Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." And what we have already seen of the fact, corresponds best with this: for, if, by the spirit of his mouth, we understand his *word*, we shall find that the scriptures, which some ages ago began to be published in the vulgar tongues of Europe, have been the chief means of *consuming* or weakening that monstrous power, after which the world has so long wandered.

But, we have digressed a little. If it should be objected, that we read in the Revelation of "harpers harping with their harps," we answer, it is true; but we also read in that book of the golden altar—of the offering of incense, as an appendage to prayer—and of other imagery borrowed from the Jewish dispensation; but no *Protestant* will from hence argue, that incense ought to be used in divine worship by Christians.

Perhaps the *Organmen* may affect to resent it as an insult, that persons wishing, as it has been hinted, to exercise and defend their right of *discretion*, should be charged with indirectly countenancing "the farrago of Popish or Protestant ceremonies." But, begging their pardon, the consequence is unavoidable from *their discretionary principle*!—For, what is the foundation of all the idle will worship, the trumpery ceremonies, and the superstitious practices of the churches of Rome and England, but this discretionary principle, viz. "that the church hath power to decree rights or ceremonies," &c.

A Protestant Dissenter accuses the Church of England of error and will-worship, in contending for this power, while the latter affirms, that "the church of Rome hath erred *in the manner of their ceremonies*," (see her 19th article,) though, in truth they have neither of them done any more than *exercise their own discretion* in those matters. "Give me," said Archimedes, "a place to stand upon, and I can raise the earth." Allow me the lawfulness of exercising my own *discretion*, in what regards the public worship of God, and I pledge myself to vindicate every invention of the man of sin! The principle of the *Organmen* is utterly untenable; they must either produce an express command or approved example for the use of instrumental music in the Apostolic churches, or they must give up the point. Should they call for a proof from any passage of the New Testament, that, even by implication, goes to annul the express command of God for the use of instrumental music in the Jewish temple, the following is at their service:—"For the priesthood being changed, there is made, of necessity, a change also of the law."—Heb. vii. 12. For, though instrumental music formed a part of the numerous rites and pompous ceremonies which were appointed by Jehovah in the first establishment of the Jewish church; to which additions were made by divine direction in the time of David; they were only suited to the nature of that dispensation, and to the church of God, which was then in a state of minority.—Galatians, iv. 1, 7.

But, though that system was fitted to both the people and the times; though it was of great utility, and answered the purpose of Jehovah, as a *shadowy dispensation*; yet the New Testament informs us, that its numerous rites were the mere elements of spiritual knowledge, and of holy worship; and, compared with the appointments and services of the Christian church, they were *beggarly elements, and carnal ordinances*. "The respect paid to God, under the Old Testament dispensation," says Dr. Erskine, in his *Theological Dissertations*, p. 69, "corresponded to his



character as a temporal monarch ; and, in a great measure, consisted in external pomp and gaiety, dancing, and instrumental music, and other expressions of joy, usual at coronations or triumphs. But the hour is now come, in which the true worshippers must worship the Father in spirit and in truth, not with external show and pageantry." But methinks I hear the Organmen expostulating and saying, "you are not doing justice to our arguments ; we are not pleading either for the lawfulness or the propriety of having a band of music in every Dissenting and Methodist congregation ; all we demand is the right of exercising our own *discretion* in availing ourselves of the use of an organ, or other instrument, merely for the purpose of keeping the singers in tune, &c. &c." And pray what more does the Papist ask, when he pleads for the privilege of decorating the walls of his chapel with the images of the saints, to "aid his grovelling conceptions, and animate his languid devotions?" It is the "exercise of his discretion" that is the very point in dispute. What I contend for is, that Christians have no *discretionary* power in this matter, any more than they have in "*neglecting*" the primitive church order, the *only* way by which schisms or divisions, and heresy, can be prevented, and union and brotherly love promoted.

The authority which Christ claims, as King in Zion, applies to every part of his instituted worship ; and, unless we can produce *his own* authority, or that of his Apostles, or an *approved* example from the first churches, we are not acting as his dutiful subjects in adopting an organ or other instrument as an appendage to public worship, however sanctioned by a *Pope*, a *Bench of Bishops*, an *Association*, or a *Conference* ; but the writer must add ; let us at all times regard the precepts and examples of the New Testament as paramount to every opinion, or doctrine, or usage of man. Let us be careful to show, that while in religion we call no man father, we are among the peaceable and quiet of the land, being in subjection to our rulers, not only for wrath, but for conscience sake. Let us show that our refusal to acknowledge any human authority in religion, does not proceed from pride and dislike of subordination, but from a sense of duty. Let our obedience to the powers ordained of God, be cheerful and exemplary ; let us obey, honour, and give thanks for magistrates, and be ready to every good work. Let us be thankful for the privileges we enjoy. Let us pray for the peace and welfare of our country, and thus, by well doing, in every respect, put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

*Outgang Hill House, Bramley, }  
near Leeds, Dec. 24, 1827. }*

